(a) whether it is a fact that India's chances of inclusion in the Security Council as permanent member is being, time and again scuttled by a neighbouring country; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) There is increasing recognition internationally of the strength of India's candidacy for permanent membership of an expanded UN Security Council.

Indian workers in Gulf countries

710. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the studies appearing in electronic media that the present global financial crisis had adversely affected Indian citizens working in the Gulf countries and they would be forced to return to India;

(b) if so, the details including number of Indian citizens working in various Gulf countries as on today, State-wise, category-wise;

(c) if so, the steps taken, if any, to improve the living conditions of the above citizens at their work place in the light of above financial crisis; and

(d) if so, the steps taken and projects envisaged if any, to rehabilitate above citizens in the eventuality of their return?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (d) The Indian Missions in Gulf countries have reported that they have not come across any adverse impact on Indian citizens working in the Gulf countries as a result of the current global financial crisis so as to force them to return to India.

Indians in jail overseas

711. SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any information with the Ministry about the overseas Indians jailed in various countries; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Ministry to get all of them released?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) The requisite details are being collected from Indian Missions /Posts abroad and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Plight of Gulf bound passengers

712. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Gulf bound passengers are posing serious problems to immigration officials at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at Shamshabad, Hyderabad and the Airport is flooded with complaints related to documents being carried by passengers;

(b) if so, the details of action taken so far by the Union Government;

(c) whether paper visas issued by Gulf-based Airlines to passengers are legally valid documents and approved as authentic documents by the Indian Immigration officials; and

(d) if not, the details of remedial measures taken so far to solve various difficulties faced by our Indian employees working in Gulf countries, who are exploited by agents and employers in Gulf countries?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Dues from foreign countries

713. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are long delays in enabling Indians get their dues from foreign countries;

(b) the number of such pending cases with the Central Government which are over a year old, State-wise;

(c) the reasons for such delays;

(d) whether requests for settlement of cases of dues are promptly acknowledged; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to put the machinery in motion to review all pending cases and expedite their solution?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (e) Government of India does not monitor the receipt by Indians of their dues from foreign countries.

Money from migrants

†714. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact the India get huge amount of money from migrants;

(b) whether the user of these sums is proving to be useful;

(c) whether any Government department maintain the account of the expenditure incurred on above item; and

(d) the percentage of the amount that is spent on the welfare of poor and backward people?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (d) The remittances from Overseas Indians for the year 2007 was estimated at US $27 billion. These are in the nature of private funds transferred by individuals for various purposes including to meet consumption expenditure of their families back home. The data in this respect is maintained by the Reserve Bank of India.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.